

High and Handsome

BY GERALD BEAUMONT

A Cop, a Cat, a Conscience, a Bruiser and a Girl.

KATIE WILLIAMS was for calling out the fire department. This would have pleased the sharp tuck of disillusionment in the path of romance. Never would the lads of No. 29 have forgiven her, for it was 6:30 in the morning, and already that night they had extinguished a fire in the garbage dumps, hauled an automobile out of the 7th street canal, and convinced a woman on Telegraph avenue that she was only suffering from a nightmare. "Fate in time," Kate took a hand in the situation and nudged Officer Joe Hanrahan, standing three blocks distant.

Twenty-seven years of age, height five feet ten inches, weight 152, Joe walked northward along his beat, employing the dignified, measured stride which is prescribed in the instructions and was deviated by the devil as the most motonous and tiresome thing on earth. Other men may be warm in the cold or rain by walking briskly, they may ease the strain on their leg muscles by varying the pace as pleasure dictates, but a young patrolman like Joe Hanrahan escapes pneumonia by placing the Sunday supplement under his shirt between the shoulder blades, and the classified ad section on his chest. Then he straps seven pounds of gun and cartridges around his waist, with the belt run through the suspenders to ease the weight of the holster, shoves a club into a pocket that holds the right leg stiff from thigh to knee, adds the bulk of handcuffs, keys and a night lamp to the rest of his official impedimenta, and saunters moodily alone in the dark, dreaming of a day beat and a corporalship. For such men the lode-star of life is the unwritten code of the police department. "High and handsome, lad—to the last breath!"

Rounding the corner of Pearl avenue and Hawthorne, Officer Hanrahan came upon beauty in distress in the person of Katie Williams, nineteen and fair to look upon. Katie was clad in a pink wrapper, bedroom slippers and a boudoir cap copied from a \$1.35 model displayed in the window of Cooper & Hastings.

Three frantic waves from Katie, reinforced by a clear soprano summons, and Joe broke into a run. The situation unfolded and the officer slowed up. From the crossbars of a sixty-foot telegraph pole a discolorate Persian kitten eyed the new arrival. The slim vision in pink appealed to the stalwart figure in blue.

"Oh, I'm so glad you came!" cried Katie. "The poor thing must have been up there all night. I heard her crying, but I couldn't imagine where she was. As soon as it was light enough I came out to see. You know, there's a man across the street that keeps buldging—"

"Well, well," said Joe. "It's your cat, miss?"

"Why, of course," said Katie. "Her name is Iris, and I'm going to enter her in the show next month. Her father is Pasha Sedate, champion sire of the Pacific Coast, and she cost \$5."

"You don't say?"

Joe extracted his polished club and tapped the pole authoritatively.

"Hey," he commanded. "Come down out of that!"

The daughter of Pasha Sedate sunk her claws more firmly into the crossbar. As plainly as feline vocal power permitted, Katie Williams' Persian indicated its contempt for police authority. Then, conscious of Katie's approving eyes, Joe leaped for the lowest foot rest, caught it, and assailed sixty feet to the level of the crossbar.

"Come here, you little devil!" said Joe, reaching out one hand.

WITH feminine inconsistency, Iris beat the officer to it. She forsook her resting place for the flat surface of the police cap, discovered its instability, and swung down to Hanrahan's collar. A brand-new sample of police headgear floundered toward the dusty sidewalk, and Joe said something that is not to be found in the book of instructions. It is very hard for a burheaded cop to preserve his dignity while descending a sixty-foot pole with a cat clinging to his neck. Joe managed it, but he felt that appearances were against him. In the subsequent sunshine of Katie's grateful smile, however, this sense of disadvantage vanished.

"Thank you, ever so much!" beamed Katie. "Gracious! I don't see how you could climb that big pole so easily, Mr.—"

"Hanrahan," said Joe. "Twice nothing at all. I'm glad to be of service to you, Miss—"

"Williams," prompted Katie. "Mother has just opened up the bakery shop on the corner. I think I noticed you passing by yesterday morning about 8 o'clock."

"Did you, now?" said Joe. "Well, well! I come off duty about that time every morning. You know, that's the prettiest cat I ever saw."

"Oh, do you really think so?" cried Katie.

She held up Iris in a manner that invited closer inspection. Joe accepted the invitation. The rose wrapper and the blue mantle of the law were thrillingly close. Round the corner clattered a milk wagon.

"Gracious!" said Katie. "Mother will be wondering what's become of me. I'm awfully sorry to have put you to all that bother. Good-bye, Mr. Hanrahan, and thank you, ever so much."

"That's all right," said Joe. "Good-bye, Miss Williams. Call on me any time at all."

Joe astonished his mother by developing a taste for buns that could only be obtained early in the morning at a bakery on the corner of Pearl avenue and Hawthorne. Katie amazed her mother by volunteering to open the store ten minutes earlier and wait on the customers without assistance. Gradually their conversation outgrew the subject of cats and entered the field of past experiences and future prospects. Katie learned that Joe lived alone with his mother and that the first step up the ladder of success for him would come with the corporals' stripes.

"Oh, it won't be long before you're promoted," said Katie. "I'm sure of that."

Joe learned that Mrs. Williams was a widow and that Katie's brother was Jockey Williams, who ran a cigar store on Telegraph avenue and managed prize fighters; also that Katie hoped some day they could afford to move into a nice part of town. Of course, there was no significance in

the fact that she cited the Hanrahan neighborhood as an example of general desirability. Joe appreciated that.

"But," said he, "it won't be long before you're coping off some swell and getting a home of your own."

Katie blushed and Joe laughed joyously. It was a lot of fun.

Officer Hanrahan did his best in the courtship of Katie Williams, but he labored under many handicaps. He took his work seriously, which meant that he did not shirk from an arrest when it seemed proper, even though that meant breaking his date with Katie the next day. Sometimes in the early hours of the morning he stood on the corner of Pearl avenue and Hawthorne looking up at Katie's window and wishing that a burglar would come along or a fire break out so that he could perform the "high and handsome" in Katie's behalf.

"Nothing has the little girl seen me do but rescue the blamed cat," he lamented. "Sure, I can't be askin' her to marry me on the strength of that."

HOW was he to know that Katie had already learned from the chum, Myrtle Gannon, who was engaged to the bailiff of Police Court No. 7, all about the splendid qualities of Officer Hanrahan? And how could a girl like Katie be sure that a wonderful man like Joe actually loved her if he couldn't get up the nerve to say so? Truly, such problems must be left to the inscrutable operations of fate, which at this juncture complicated matters by introducing the tertium quid.

Officer Hanrahan had never heard of a tertium quid, but he recognized it just the same when big Marcel Legrand showed up, 230 pounds, six feet three, gorgeous as a Greek god and quick as a cat. That was the fault of little Jockey Williams, who knew nothing about the dreams of a harness bulb and cared less. Katie's

brother was ambitious to add a heavyweight champion to his stable of fighters. Therefore, when the magnificent physical director of the Balboa Athletic Club won the amateur heavyweight championship of the Pacific Coast Jockey Williams was an interested spectator at the ring-side.

Thrice did Katie's brother inveigle Marcel Legrand to the little flat over the bakery at Pearl and Hawthorne, each time expanding upon the golden possibilities that awaited them in the professional field. On the third evening Marcel, with his eyes on Katie Williams, agreed to become the next heavyweight champion of the world and the business partner of Katie's brother. This did fate, with a single move, bestow further advantages on a man already endowed by nature with every charm and at the same time put Officer Joe Hanrahan squarely up against it.

Jockey Williams saw to it that Marcel Legrand's professional debut was properly heralded in the newspapers. The little cigar vendor knew how to pick the right sort of an opponent and where to secure a press agent that knew his business. The new giant of the ring became an overnight sensation. He was, in the language of the press agent, "a super specimen of physical manhood, a credit to the game, a gentleman, and possessed of all the qualifications of a champion."

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THE CHAMPION REARED BACK WITH HIS GLOVES HIGH, PAWING THE AIR.

These things reached the ears of Corporal Dan Malloy, who took up the matter tactfully with Officer Hanrahan.

"'Tis against human nature, Joe," he said. "But you must keep your hands off the big man unless the law is on your side. We're paid to enforce the peace, not to break it. If it was only Dan Malloy, speaking to Joe Hanrahan, I'd say, 'Go to it, Joe, and may the best man win.' You know that, Joe. But the stripes are on me, and